3.3.8 SOCIOECONOMICS

Socioeconomic characteristics described for NTS include employment, regional economy, population, housing, community services, and local transportation. Statistics for employment and regional economy are presented for the REA that encompasses 11 counties surrounding NTS in Nevada, Arizona, and Utah (Table L.1–1). Statistics for population, housing, community services, and local transportation are presented for the ROI, a two-county area in which 97 percent of all NTS employees reside: Clark County (82 percent) and Nye County (15 percent). In 1991, NTS employed approximately 7,700 persons (2.1 percent of the total REA employment) (Table L.1–3). [Text deleted.]

Regional Economy Characteristics. Selected employment and regional economy statistics for the REA are summarized in Figure 3.3.8–1. The civilian labor force in the REA increased approximately 64 percent between 1980 and 1990, reaching 506,394 in the latter year. Total employment in the REA was 587,533 in 1994. In that year, the regional unemployment rate in the REA was 6.1 percent, comparable to the rate in Arizona (6.4 percent) and Nevada (6.2 percent), but much higher than the rate in Utah (3.7 percent). The 1993 per capita income in the REA was \$20,561, lower than Nevada's per capita income of \$22,727, but higher than the per capita income in Arizona or Utah, \$18,085 and \$16,354, respectively.

Employment patterns in the REA parallel those in Arizona, Nevada, and Utah, with manufacturing, retail trade, and service providing the majority of nonfarm private sector jobs. The service sector is the primary source of employment in both the REA and Nevada providing 43.5 percent and 43.4 percent of jobs, respectively. This sector is less dominant in Arizona and Utah, accounting for 30.2 percent and 28.6 percent of total employment in those states, respectively.

Population and Housing. Population and housing trends in the ROI are summarized in Figure 3.3.8–2. Population in the ROI increased 103.4 percent between 1980 and 1994, reaching 960,088 at the end of the period. This rate of increase surpassed Nevada's population growth of 82.0 percent during the same period.

The total number of housing units in the ROI also increased significantly between 1980 and 1990, increasing by 65.9 percent compared to a 52.6 percent increase within Nevada. In 1990, homeowner and renter vacancy rates in the NTS ROI were similar to those in Nevada, approximately 2 percent and 9 percent, respectively.

Community Services. Community services described for the NTS ROI are education, public safety, and health care. Figure 3.3.8–3 presents school district characteristics for the NTS ROI, and Figure 3.3.8–4 presents public safety and health care characteristics.

Education. Two school districts provide public education services and facilities in the NTS ROI. During the 1994-95 school year, the Nye County School District had an enrollment of 4,170 students while the Clark School District had an enrollment of 156,348 students. The two school districts operated at 85 and 100 percent of capacity, respectively, as shown in Figure 3.3.8-3. The average student-to-teacher ratio in the ROI was 19.6:1.

Public Safety. Five city and county law enforcement agencies provide police protection in the ROI. In 1994, the highest ratio of sworn officer-to-population in the two-county region was in Nye County, with 3.3 officers per 1,000 persons. The average ROI officer-to-population ratio was 2.0 officers per 1,000 persons. [Text deleted.]

During 1995, a total of 1,505 regular and volunteer firefighters provided fire protection services to the ROI. The rural county departments include both professional and volunteer staff, while the city districts are exclusively professional. Among the firefighting departments, the Nye County Fire Department has the highest firefighter-to-population ratio with 6.1 firefighters per 1,000 persons, although most of the firefighters are

volunteers (Figure 3.3.8-4). [Text deleted.] The average ROI firefighter-to-population ratio was 1.6 firefighters per 1,000 persons.

Health Care. Nine hospitals serve the two-county region, all operating well below capacity. In 1994, a total of 1,244 physicians served the ROI. Figure 3.3.8–4 shows that the physician-to-population ratio ranged from 0.3 physicians per 1,000 persons in Nye County to 1.3 physicians per 1,000 persons in Clark County. The ROI average physician-to-population ratio was 1.3 physicians per 1,000 persons. The hospital bed-to-population ratio ranged from 2.1 beds per 1,000 persons in Nye County to 2.4 beds per 1,000 persons in Clark County.

Local Transportation. Vehicular access to NTS is provided by U.S. Route 95 to the south (see Figure 2.2.2–1 and Figure 2.2.2–2). [Text deleted.] Road segments providing access to NTS experience little traffic congestion outside of the Las Vegas metropolitan area. There are no current or planned road improvement projects that would affect access to NTS (NV DOT 1995a:1).

Two road segments in the ROI could be affected by the storage and disposition alternatives. The first is U.S. 95 from Business Route U.S. 95 to just south of Nevada State Route 160. This segment operated at level of service A in 1995. The second is U.S. 95 from just south of Nevada State Route 160 to just south of Nevada State Route 266. This segment operated at level of service C in 1995.

Although there is no public transportation system serving NTS, a contract bus service for workers is available at a nominal cost. The major railroad in the ROI is the Union Pacific Railroad located approximately 80 km (50 mi) east of NTS near Las Vegas. There are no navigable waterways within the ROI.

McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas provides jet air passenger and cargo service from both national and local carriers. Numerous smaller private airports are located throughout the ROI.

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